My Thoughts and Reflections

Grigory Rasputin

A brief account of a pilgrimage to holy places and the religious reflections inspired by it

Newly translated from the Russian

Part I

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The greater public thus far has lingered in the realm of guesswork, assumption, and whispered legend regarding the renowned "elder" who is but fifty-two years of age and is distinguished by a rare flexibility and endurance, possessing a purely youthful ecstasy and fervor. Within the booklet now offered to the reader, one of the most curious chapters of his life is laid bare, revealing his disposition toward matters of a spiritual and ecclesiastical nature. In this realm, as in all others, G. I. Rasputin remains entirely original, distinctive, and primitively simple; these are the very qualities that conquer hearts and win sympathies, both in his personal life and in the sphere of artistic creation. In Rasputin's "Thoughts and Reflections" one finds no drawn-out, analytical narratives dissecting the emotions we all experience when treading upon ground where nearly every stone is hallowed by tradition and spiritualized by dreams. The beauty of Rasputin's style lies rather in the vividness and brevity with which he captures—not merely the outward form of an object or phenomenon—but its innermost essence and its weight upon a receptive heart.

Each of us is acquainted with at least two or three exemplary works by celebrated authors who have journeyed through Palestine—that holy land where hundreds of thousands of simple-born Russian pilgrims, much like Rasputin himself, flock year after year. Many are especially familiar with the vast, artfully crafted French literature depicting Palestine. Yet, set against this refined, occasionally bombastic, and often cloyingly vibrant literature, Rasputin's "Thoughts and Reflections" stands apart. It is entirely autonomous, remarkable for its originality and for a mode of thinking that is intrinsically characteristic of the common folk, and deeply understood by them.

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Let us consider the introduction, the first stage of his pilgrimage: the Kiev Caves Lavra and the city of Kiev. "I journeyed unto the Holy Lavra from Peter [St. Petersburg]," Rasputin begins, "and I shall call Peter the light, yet this light is a persecutor of our thoughts toward the vain world, whereas in the Lavra, the gentle light of stillness shines.

When they lower the icon of the Mother of God and the singing resounds, 'Beneath thy compassion we take refuge,' the soul freezes, and thou rememberest the vanity of vanities from thy youth. Thou goest down into the caves and beholdest pure simplicity: there is neither gold nor silver; only stillness breathes...

And thou wilt remember thine own excess, which oppresses and bends thee low, leading only to sorrow. Willy-nilly, thou art made to remember the vanity of this fleeting life."

"Woe unto the restless, for their toil hath no end."

"The wondrous Pochaev Lavra. What brought me marvel? First, I beheld the people of God and rejoiced greatly in the pilgrims, seeing that I had found true worshippers; here a holy fear stirred in my soul, teaching me the science of seeking God, and showing how these folk gather the true pearl. And then I beheld the Mother of God, and fear and trembling embraced me; I gained a deep stillness and found a new meekness within my breast. Verily, after every holy shrine, a precious pearl of humility is added unto the soul."

If one reads deeply into these lines—where everything is distilled into a single religious impulse and a profound awe before simplicity and the humbling of pride—they differ as much from the pretentious descriptions of our contemporaries as A. Ivanov's method in his painting *The Appearance of*

Christ differs from his contemporary Bryullov's spectacular canvas, *The Last Day of Pompeii*. Ivanov possesses an inspired and unforgettable philosophy of the eternal, while Bryullov relies upon a fleeting affectation, exhausted within a single episode.

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Within the span of a modest booklet, Rasputin distills everything to a single guiding principle, as if gathering all his scattered thoughts into one sharp focus: the principle of meekness and humility. Here, there is no element of non-resistance to evil, nor a simplification leading to total indifference; rather, the principles of reconciliation and self-reflection burn with a radiant light, bringing man joy—not causing him to flee from life, but returning him fully to it. And even in moments of the highest lyrical elevation, the narrator (for it is impossible to apply the word "author" to Rasputin, as the term scarcely harmonizes with the name of a peasant from the village of Pokrovskoye) remains at a height of expressiveness that echoes the mighty resonance of the Russian epic.

Here, for example, is "A Description of the Sea," as the traveler himself titles his lines, dedicated not so much to the landscape as to the influence of the water element on the pacification of the human soul and spirit:

"What can I say of my stillness? No sooner had I departed Odessa upon the Black Sea than a great stillness settled over the waters; the soul rejoices with the sea and slumbers in peace. Thou canst see the little waves glinting like golden coins, and there is naught else to seek. Behold a divine parable: how precious is the soul of a man; is it not a pearl? And what is the sea compared unto it?

Without the slightest toil, the sea brings comfort. When thou risest in the morning, the waves speak, and splash, and bring gladness. And the sun shines upon the waters, rising as if quietly—so very

quietly—and in that hour, a man's soul forgets all worldly humanity to gaze upon the brilliance of the sun. Then joy ignites within a man, and the book of life and the wisdom of life are felt deep within the soul—a beauty beyond all telling!"

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Hypocrisy and pretense are utterly foreign to the nature of G. I. Rasputin, a man who entertains no thought of making a worldly name for himself through the trial of "eldership"—a concept traditionally tied to the legends of the Optina Pustyn. This absence of hypocrisy leaves a highly distinctive mark upon "Thoughts and Reflections." You will find no shadow of musty, ecclesiastical unctuousness within them, nor will you encounter clichéd preaching; instead, these thoughts are deeply touching, akin to the profound, simple sigh of a layman who has suddenly and joyfully become convinced of the truth of his faith and the beauty of his own experiences.

Consider this example. The pilgrim halts with special reverence before the cell of Theodore the Studite. Yet it is neither the physical cell nor the righteous man himself that preoccupies Rasputin, but rather their instructiveness for our present life.

"It is dark," Rasputin writes of the cell, "and calling unto repentance—this is truly an ascetic of God! The Lord, for our sins, giveth the dwelling of the righteous man over to be a laughing stock, yet naught can touch the soul of the righteous. They may strip thee of everything—even thy dwelling—but thy soul, never. A man must beseech God for patience, for the loss of earthly things is a mighty spiritual feat. For the loss of the earthly, the heavenly reward is greater than if thou hadst given it up of thine own accord." And here he hurries to clarify: "If thou givest it up thyself, it is of thine own will; but here,

they deprive thee of it. Thou sorrowest—and through such sorrow, thou dost inherit the Kingdom of God."

However, it would be a mistake to assume that Rasputin's moral instruction regarding the Holy Land is sweeping or overbearing.

With purely childlike naïveté and spontaneity, he is moved by a column brought from Rome to Constantinople, calling it a "miracle" simply because it weighs "a thousand pounds," and observing that "the mountains of Lebanon dispose one to piety," and that "the valley of Jaffa is of such immense beauty that, should anyone bear grief or suffer the loss of an earthly treasure, I am certain those sorrows would be carried away like smoke in the wind by the sheer abundance with which God shines upon these places." Rasputin invariably returns to the element of love and grace, which he is firmly convinced humanity so desperately needs.

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In this ceaseless striving to find love everywhere and to call for its active expression—a love rooted in a calm rejection of excess—lies the fundamental principle of this booklet. Perhaps it is precisely this presence of boundless love and loving-kindness toward all people that constitutes the true charm of this peculiar Russian peasant. It is a charm that has elevated him, by fate, to the heights of not merely accidental, but sustained attention from the entire world, as evidenced by the vast number of articles, brochures, and books dedicated to him, even in the West.

Lines penned by an illiterate hand (the original of Rasputin's manuscript is reproduced in facsimile here: *"Woe to the restless and wicked—even the sun does not warm them; spring does not comfort the greedy and bored; in their eyes there is no day—it is always night." Grigori Rasputin-Novyi.*) breathe inspiration and that brief clarity which is the hallmark of talented commoners unburdened by the weight of formal knowledge. Rasputin notes with his inherent laconicism that "among the Greeks all bishops are literate"

and they observe great splendor in their services, "but there is no poverty of spirit. The common folk only follow the poverty of spirit; they will follow it in droves, for while splendor is high, poverty of spirit is higher still. Without poverty of spirit, a bishop will weep if he is not given a jeweled cross, but if he possesses the spirit, then even a ragged cassock is sweet to him—and the crowd will follow that ragged cassock."

"And wherefore do they now scatter into various confessions?" asks this wandering simpleton, far from his homeland but keeping it ever in his thoughts. "It is because there is no spirit in the temple, only a great deal of the letter—and so the temple stands empty."

In this "poverty of spirit"—whose significance runs like a red thread through the entirety of Rasputin's "Thoughts and Reflections"—he sees the only true foundation for the universal unification of humanity.

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Alongside purely external, descriptive impressions, and alongside the reflection of religious ecstasy, there are flashes of genuine philosophy and a foresight of that approaching time when "all nations will merge into one family" sparkling within "Thoughts and Reflections."

"I have become convinced," Rasputin notes, "that the garments of the Turks are the same as those of the Christians and the Jews. One may expect the fulfillment of God's word over all people: that there shall be a single Church, regardless of the outward difference in dress. First, they will destroy this difference in clothing, and then the unity will pass into faith."

The most solemn moment of the pilgrimage—the appearance at the Holy Sepulchre, an event that usually consumes entire pages in other authors' descriptions—is distilled by Rasputin into a mere few lines. They are worth quoting in full, for they provide a precise understanding of the foundations of this man's worldview, as well as characterizing his method of expressing his thoughts.

"What shall I say of the great moment when I drew near unto the Tomb of Christ! I felt that the Tomb is the very tomb of love, and such a feeling welled up within me that I was ready to embrace and caress everyone. I felt such love for my brethren that all people seemed holy, for true love sees no flaws behind a man. Here, at the Lord's Tomb, thou beholdest all people spiritually with thy heart—all who love—and they feel a profound sense of joy."

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"Thoughts and Reflections," originating from the pen of Rasputin, is fully capable of overturning the stereotypic judgments regarding this man. It reveals a subtlety of analysis, a deep profundity, and, most importantly, an extraordinariness of thought, even when treading upon ground where it is difficult to avoid the ordinary.

That is why we found it both possible and necessary to acquaint our readers with this unusual and highly original phenomenon of our days—and perhaps of the entire century. In any case, it remains a bright and characteristic feature of our times, one that will undoubtedly serve as an abundant subject for future historians, psychologists, and researchers of public life.

In the Kiev Caves Lavra

I journeyed unto the Holy Lavra from Peter [St. Petersburg], and I shall call Peter the light, yet this light is a persecutor of our thoughts toward the vain world, whereas in the Lavra, the gentle light of stillness shines.

When they lower the icon of the Mother of God and the singing resounds, "Beneath thy compassion we take refuge," the soul freezes, and thou rememberest the vanity of vanities from thy youth. Thou goest down into the caves and beholdest pure simplicity: there is neither gold nor silver; only stillness breathes, and the Saints of God rest in plainness, without silver shrines, in simple oaken coffins. And thou wilt remember thine own excess, which oppresses and bends thee low, leading only to sorrow. Willy-nilly, thou art made to remember the vanity of this fleeting life.

Woe unto the restless, for their toil hath no end.

O Lord, deliver me from worldly friends, for the demon himself is naught. The demon hides within the friend, and the friend is but vanity.

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And I beheld the wondrous caves, a miracle of miracles. How God hath blessed them! How can we not believe? Willy-nilly, thou must sigh in awe. They are hewn into the wild stone; the very Hand of God forged them, and there the monks took shelter from the invasion of foreigners.

Heavy are the memories of the foreign tormentors, but in our present days, the greater torment is brother against brother, and how men no longer recognize their own kin. Therefore, the torments of today are heavier still, and it is a grievous offense. That is why I am certain that the martyrs' crowns will be drawn closer to the Face of God from the hands of these present tormentors (in the year 1911).

In the old days, men were tormented by foreigners, but now they torment themselves—especially fathers turning against fathers, and monks against monks. And here the Word of God is fulfilled upon us: brother against brother and son against father—truly, the end is drawing nigh.

And I beheld the resting place of Job in the caves of Pechersk, where his little kennel is narrow, exceedingly narrow, yet it breathes the sweet aroma of holy fragrance.

And wherefore doth it bear such fragrance? It is very simple: for the fact that he chose no grand palace for himself, but lay down in poor mangers, patiently and peacefully enduring his confinement. If only we, dwelling in our simplicity or in our luxury, could transport ourselves in spirit to his narrow kennel and beg for his prayers; surely the Lord would not refuse is holy intercession, and we would become partakers with him at the right hand of the Father. But to find words to express his mighty patience is impossible: the books themselves could not contain it.

In the Pochaev Lavra

The wondrous Pochaev Lavra. What brought me marvel? First, I beheld the people of God and rejoiced greatly in the pilgrims, seeing that I had found true worshippers; here a holy fear stirred in my soul, teaching me the science of seeking God, and showing how these folk gather the true pearl. And then I beheld the Mother of God, and fear and trembling embraced me; I gained a deep stillness and found a new meekness within my breast. Verily, after every holy shrine, a precious pearl of humility is added unto the soul.

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And so I entered the Cathedral, and fear and trembling possessed me. I remembered earthly vanity. Wondrous miracles! Upon the very spot where the Mother of God herself stepped and left her footprint, a holy spring flows down through the stone cliff into the cave, and there everyone draws the water with faith. It is impossible not to believe.

Oh, what happy Russian people we are, yet we neither value nor know the true worth of miracles! Woe unto us Orthodox Christians, that we do not wish to go and look upon them, being too lazy to travel; instead, we journey abroad to gawk at various foreign mountains, looking upon them merely as a luxury, and not as the creation of God.

A Brief Description of the Sea

What can I say of my stillness? No sooner had I departed Odessa upon the Black Sea than a great stillness settled over the waters; the soul rejoices with the sea and slumbers in peace. Thou canst see the little waves glinting like golden coins, and there is naught else to seek. Behold a divine parable: how precious is the soul of a man; is it not a pearl? And what is the sea when compared unto it?

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Without the slightest toil, the sea brings comfort. When thou risest in the morning, the waves speak, and splash, and bring gladness. And the sun shines upon the waters, rising as if quietly—so very quietly—and in that hour, a man's soul forgets all worldly humanity to gaze upon the brilliance of the sun. Then joy ignites within a man, and the book of life and the wisdom of life are felt deep within the soul—a beauty beyond all telling! The sea awakens a man from the slumber of worldly vanities; he reflects deeply, all by himself, without any striving.

The sea is vast, but the mind of man is vaster still.

Human wisdom hath no end; it remains a mystery, incomprehensible to all the philosophers.

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There is yet a greater beauty when the sun falls upon the sea and sets, casting its radiant rays. Who can truly appreciate those beams? They warm and caress the soul; they heal and bring comfort. Minute by minute, the sun dips behind the mountains, and a man's soul grieves a little for those daytime rays... It grows dark.

Oh, what a profound stillness descends... there is not even the cry of a bird. Stirred by contemplation, a man begins to pace the deck; involuntarily, he remembers his childhood and all

worldly vanity. He compares his present stillness with the vain world, conversing quietly with himself, wishing to dispel the boredom driven upon him by his unseen enemies...

A quiet night upon the sea, and we fall asleep peacefully from deep reflections, from profound impressions... O Christ's sea! Upon thee are wondrous miracles. Thou wert visited by God Himself and forged with wonders.

The shores draw near and the little trees begin to shine; how can one not rejoice? Where once neither a bush nor a leaf was visible, suddenly the shores appear! We draw close and gaze upon God's nature, praising the Lord for His Creation and the beauty of the earth, which cannot be captured by human mind nor philosophy.

The waves beat upon the sea—and an alarm arises in the soul. A man loses his clarity of mind, walking as if in a thick fog... O God, grant us spiritual stillness!

Upon the sea, sickness is but temporary, but upon the shore, such a wave crashes eternally.

Upon the sea, a man's sickness is visible to all, but upon the shore, it remains hidden from every eye—it is the demon troubling the soul.

Conscience is like a wave; no matter how fierce the waves upon the sea, they will eventually calm, but the pangs of conscience can only be extinguished by a righteous deed.

Upon the shore, we ail far more deeply.

Oh, what deception, what trouble—they will be told of it, and they will look and see... Conscience, though it lacks a tongue, pronounces to everyone their flaws; all must look upon it. Here we cannot hide a single sin nor bury it in the dirt.

And every hidden sin is exactly like a cannon shot—verily, everyone shall know of it...

A Brief Description of Constantinople

What can I say with my small human mind of the great, wondrous Cathedral of Holy Wisdom, the foremost in the whole world?

Like a mighty cloud upon the horizon, so stands the temple of Sophia.

Oh, woe! How the Lord is angered by our pride, that He handed over that holy shrine to the impious Turks and allowed His face to become a laughing stock and mockery—they smoke tobacco within it! O Lord, hear us and return it; let the temple be an ark once more! According to holy tradition, it is said that precisely because of pride the temple was taken from the Orthodox, for they did not revere this ark, treating it instead as a house of revelry and luxury. The Lord waxed wroth for a long time, and commanded that His shrine be blasphemed. Let us wait—the Lord will have mercy and return it with praise; we will feel it, and we will repent.

Within it, undamaged places have been preserved; they signify the Savior (in the altar) and the Mother of God (at the exit of the Temple). Within the temple, there hang three hundred chandeliers. Wondrous miracles! In the place where the sultan jumped his horse over the corpses of fallen warriors—for the church was filled with the Orthodox—the horse struck the column with its hoof, tearing out a massive piece of stone, and this mark is preserved to this very day. And where the sultan leaned his bloodied hand upon the column, his handprint remains visible in the wild stone, clear as day: five fingers and the entire palm of his hand are etched there.

This is a great miracle! And so, therefore, the temple shall return to the hands of Orthodoxy; here God worketh miracles and commandeth repentance.

We reached the monastery of Theodore the Studite; within it, a great deal of holy painting and Orthodox icons have been preserved: the Mother of God of the Sign, and many others. It directly pacifies a Christian's soul.

The confession cell of Theodore the Studite is preserved to this day, dark and calling unto repentance—truly an ascetic of God! The Lord, for our sins, gave the dwelling of the righteous man over to be a laughingstock, yet naught can touch the soul of the righteous. They may strip thee of everything—even thy dwelling—but thy soul, never. His earthly merits were trampled, and the labors of the righteous man were mocked and made a laughingstock, but they adorned the very heavens with his patience. Therefore, it stands as an example for us: earthly deprivation is a heavenly comfort.

A man must beseech God for patience, for the loss of earthly things is a mighty spiritual feat. For the loss of the earthly, the heavenly reward is greater than if thou hadst given it up of thine own accord.

If thou givest it up thyself, it is of thine own free will; but here, they deprive thee of it. Thou sorrowest, and through such sorrows, thou dost inherit the Kingdom of God. God shall help everyone to endure their losses with patience, and for this, He will make them heirs of the Heavenly Father.

Right here in Constantinople, within the same temple, the pulpit of John Chrysostom and the relics of St. Euphemia are preserved, alongside other holy memorials: among them, the very column to which the Savior was chained. Thou thinkest that everywhere they show sufferings: O God, what sinners we are! Everything is a suffering for us.

Thou rememberest how long ago Chrysostom preached, yet everything feels as if it were happening now; it is as if the patriarchal voice still rings out, and a small icon is preserved upon his pulpit.

And Romanos the Melodist is there, too.

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O God, how much miracle hath been created!

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In honor of the twelve Apostles, a huge temple was built, which hath now been turned into a mosque. Nothing is preserved here, neither icons nor memories; it is only known that within the temple of all the Apostles, the mockery of the shrine took place.

I will not describe the Greek churches—wondrous antiquity!

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There is a church in Constantinople where Andrew, the Fool for Christ, prayed and beheld the Mother of God. I stood upon that spot, though only a small wall and ruins have survived, along with a little garden, and a little further away, a Greek church.

The soul freezes at the touching memory of how the Mother of God protected everyone in the air and prayed for all, just as she doeth even now on the Feast of the Intercession. Her sole care is to have mercy upon us and to comfort us. She teacheth her ascetics to pray; she appeareth to her righteous and to sinners alike, listening to the petitions brought by everyone unto her, our mother. She knoweth

all our needs, and we receive everything for which she asketh the Lord; her petitions to the Lord always reach Him.

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One mighty column weighing a thousand poods was brought from Rome to Constantinople—this is a great miracle; one cannot describe it all. I have not written much of Constantinople.

Further On

We reached Mytilene, a small town where the Apostle Paul preached, and right here rest the thirty martyrs in whom he lit the fire of faith; they believed in Christ, and to this day this place serves as a living reminder that his preaching here remains alive.

The town is beautiful, nestled by the sea over the waters in the mountains. Here lies the gulf of the archipelago and the wondrous beauty of the shores, with magnificent mountains.

O God, lead us into Thy footsteps; the further we journey, the more soul-saving places we encounter! One can understand that it is not for naught that the Russian peasant gathers all his little coppecks and strives to behold these places where miracles occur.

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I met a great many folk, but especially in the third class, there are many true Christian women. They suffer and pray constantly, reading akathists morning and evening; thou lookest upon them and thou dost not grow weary.

And I beheld Bulgarian women who truly understand the Kingdom of God—truely myrrh-bearing women who possess a deep love for Christ.

I have become convinced that the garments of the Turks are the same as those of the Christians and the Jews. One may expect the fulfillment of God's word over us: that there shall be a single Orthodox Church, regardless of the outward difference in dress.

First, they destroyed this difference, and then it will cross over to faith; it is hard to grasp all this. First, all foreigners will be seduced by clothing, and then from them shall arise a Single Church.

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Smyrna is located upon the Asia Minor coast at the end of a vast gulf—the Gulf of Smyrna.

In Smyrna, there are several beautiful Greek temples. One of them stands upon the spot where the Samaritan woman conversed with Jacob about the Savior and believed in Him.

What holy events are kept by the Turks! How to fathom that everything rests with the Turks, all of antiquity. What can one say to this, except that it is better that there be a spirit unified with us and a Single Orthodox Church. In Smyrna, besides the temple which the Samaritan woman, named Photini, founded through her preaching, there is also a temple upon the spot where the Mother of God herself preached.Right here rest the relics of St. George the Victorious (part of his leg) and the relics of St. Cosmas the Unmercenary.

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Further on we sailed past the island of Mytilene, where Bishop Gregory was (commemorated on November 7). The preaching of the Holy Hierarchs is exceedingly clear: it shines brightly in the hearts of the Orthodox.

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In Smyrna, there is a mountain upon which stood a circus where the disciples of John the Theologian and many others with them were tortured. Where are there not martyrs for Christ? All heavenly crowns, it seems, were achieved through blood.

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Not far from Smyrna, the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus have been preserved. John the Theologian—the Apostle—dwelt in Ephesus for a long time and finished his Gospel here, the deep well of all Wisdom; therefore, the very strait by the sea will awaken much to life from sleep.

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Here the Mother of God temporarily resided, and the Third Holy Council gathered. In Ephesus, the first bishop was the Apostle Timothy, a disciple of the Apostle Paul. Both died as holy martyrs. John Chrysostom also dwelt here. Many caves have been preserved around Ephesus.

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One must ride to the caves by horse.

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This wondrous path teacheth thee to look at thyself, to see how thou art succeeding and whether thou art a true co-worker of these holy places and apostolic ideals. If only to sow a tiny seed of truth, and for this we shall come alive, provided it is not the work of the enemy—provided Satan hath not possessed us, nor cast upon us his cunning nets, in which we know not how to find escape.

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Not far away is also the island of Chios, where Isidore was martyred in the third century.

All these places are sanctified. O God, sanctify us together with them; take pity upon us!

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The island of Patmos. Here John the Theologian was imprisoned, and here he wrote the Gospel and the Apocalypse. Upon the site of the Evangelist John the Theologian's stay now stands an Orthodox Greek monastery, and the whole island is inhabited by Christians. John will pray for his pilgrims, and we shall become his helpers.

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We sailed out into the Mediterranean Sea; the steamer does not dock anywhere.

O God, how much faith the Apostles lit along these shores! Without end, they made lovers of Christ, and for this, there are martyrs everywhere, upon this side and that side of the Mediterranean Sea; yet the Greeks grew proud with their philosophy. The Lord waxed wroth and handed all the labors of the Apostles over to the Turks.

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At present, among the Greeks, all the bishops are literate and observe great splendor as they serve, but there is no poverty of spirit. The common folk only follow the poverty of spirit; they will follow it in droves, for while splendor is high, poverty of spirit is higher still. Without poverty, a bishop will weep if he is not given a jeweled cross, but if the spirit is within him, then even a ragged cassock is sweet—and the crowd will follow that ragged cassock. To this I am an eyewitness—forgive me, I am very well acquainted with many bishops—may the Lord save them for their unity.

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And wherefore do they now scatter into different confessions? Because there is no spirit in the temple, only a great deal of the letter—and so the temple stands empty. Yet even in recent times, when Father John (of Kronstadt) served, the spirit of poverty was in the temple, and thousands flocked to him for spiritual food.

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And even now there are, though few, such holy servants; there are bishops, but they are afraid lest they elevate simple monks who are holier, rather than those who have built up fat in the monastery—it is hard for these fat ones to struggle; laziness crushes them. Of course, all things are possible with God; there are some fat monks who were simply born that way—after all, health is a gift, and in some of them there is also a spark of God—I speak not of them.

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There is nothing better than when thou travelest to Jerusalem, and thou beholdest the holy shores where the apostles found salvation, walked along these very shores, and more than once crossed over the waters from shore to shore, from city to city! Just think how the people travel with holy fear, and how easy it is to pray here. Thou seest how the apostles prayed here for all travelers; therefore, it is easy to pray upon the sea, because God feedeth with wisdom there and nourisheth with milk.

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The city of Rhodes, drowning in all sorts of verdant gardens. What grace there is upon the Mediterranean Sea! What isn't there in Rhodes: lush greenery and blooming flowers even in the month of February. How the Lord warms the earth there, granting an eternally fruitful year; great is God's mercy upon this place!

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The Mother of God visited Cyprus. Upon the island of Cyprus there is much holiness, ancient ascetics, and the remains of holy relics. There are many monasteries there, both male and female.

We passed the city of Mersina. All these places have been visited by miraculous events; willy-nilly, the soul will rejoice.

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Five hours' ride from Beirut lies the grave of the prophet Jonah, who dwelt in the belly of the whale and was cast out by the beast into the Mediterranean Sea. What wondrous prophecies were spoken by him, to expose the madmen who knew not what they were doing! For them, their madness was enough, but it pleased the Lord to send prophets unto them, and so these madmen believed and became holy ascetics. But we all know where the Holy of Holies lies, yet we plug our ears tightly so as not to hear, and close our eyes so as not to see, whispering unto ourselves: "There is still time—there are many years ahead, we shall save ourselves a thousand times over."

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The city of Tripoli stands by the sea; around it rises a part of the Lebanon mountains, and there is naught else but a fortress, much like our Peter and Paul Fortress. The Lebanon mountains dispose a man to piety.

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Beirut is situated above the sea, completely immersed in greenery. O God, everywhere is the source of life! George the Victorious crushed the serpent in this city; upon this spot there is a well and a

Turkish prayer house, and the lake is overgrown with reeds. Woe! How God is angered with the Orthodox; one needs to think how unpleasant it is under the Turks, yet God gave them all the holy sites. Here is a grim example: when we receive some splendor from the Lord and trample it down, an emptiness is forged within us; the holy site is cast out of place.

O great ascetic and wonderworker of God, grant us the strength to behold thy beauty!

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O God, worker of miracles, what memories, what wonders are wrought all over the earth! Concerning the pleasing of Thee, O Lord, we ask and pray unto Thee: forsake us not, we lazy ones; our hope and trust rest entirely in Thee; gladden us, O Lord, with Thy wondrous prayers.

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Jaffa, where the prophet Elijah dwelt. And upon the spot where the prophet prayed, at the bottom of the mountain, lies a cave—here stands a Greek monastery. I am an eyewitness to all these places; holy fire came down there, and at the same time there was no rain. Much miracle was wrought by Elijah in the city of Jaffa.

I beheld his stern gaze looking out from his icon toward us sinners, and when we looked upon him, a trembling for everything good settled within our bones, O God.

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Glorious Elijah, entreat Christ! For thou art flesh like us, and the Lord will hear thee; we earnestly beseech thee, entreat Christ that He may love us and have mercy upon us, and grant us eternal bliss.

* * *

From here one may make the journey unto Nazareth.

* * *

Here lies the valley of Jaffa of immense beauty; it captured a piece of paradise... There is nothing wiser in the whole world than this place. As it is spoken in church concerning the abundance of the fruits of the earth, well, behold it here. It is almost unbelievable that one can stumble upon such an immense paradise of beauty upon this earth. Let any man bear grief or suffer the loss of an earthly treasure—I am certain those sorrows would be carried away like smoke in the wind by the sheer abundance with which God shines upon these places. Illuminate us sinners, as well, with true radiance and Thy boundless mercy.

Jerusalem

Finished the journey, arrived in the holy city of Jerusalem by the high road.

Upon transitioning from the great rolling wave to the earthly paradise of stillness—the very first thing we did was hold a prayer service [moleben].

* * *

I cannot describe the impression of joy here, ink is utterly powerless—it's impossible, and the tears of every pilgrim will flow freely alongside that joy. On the one hand, the soul joyfully sings "Let God arise," but on the other hand, it remembers the great sorrows of the Lord: the Lord suffered here. Oh, how thou seest the Mother of God standing at the Cross! Thou vividly picturest all of this, and rememberest how He had to grieve so much for us in His agony.

O Lord, thou walkest and thinkest, and sorrow rises in thy heart, and thou seest—the people walk just as they did then, wearing cloaks, and the strange clothing of the Old Testament remains upon them; just as it is now, so it was then. And so tears flow, those sacred days draw near, Great Lent hath come—thou walkest out of the temple, and rememberest that in these very temples all the great events took place, and the Savior Himself shed tears.

* * *

What shall I say of such a minute, when I drew near unto the Tomb of Christ!

I felt that the Tomb is the very tomb of love, and such a feeling welled up within me that I was ready to embrace and caress everyone. I felt such love for my brethren that all people seemed holy, for true love sees no flaws behind a man. Here, at the Lord's Tomb, thou beholdest all people spiritually with thy heart—all who love—and they feel a profound sense of joy.

* * *

How many thousands of visitors will resurrect with Him! And what kind of folk are they? All simpletons who are contrite of heart—God made them love Him across the sea through various trials and fears; they fast, their food is naught but dry rusks, they do not even see how they are being saved. O God, what can I say of the Tomb! I will only cry out in my soul: O Lord, do Thou Thyself resurrect me from the depth of sin into Thine Eternal Mansion of Life!

* * *

Oh, what an impression Golgotha makes. Right here in the temple of the Resurrection, where the Queen of Heaven stood, upon that spot a round chalice is formed, and from this spot the Mother of God looked up to the height of Golgotha and wept bitterly when they crucified the Lord upon the Cross. When thou lookest at the spot where the Mother of God stood, tears shall surely flow, and thou seest it vividly before thee as it truly was.

O God, what a dread deed was done! And they took down the Body and laid it below. What heavy sadness and what weeping there is upon the spot where the Body lay!

O God, O God, what is all this for? O God, let us sin no more; save us by Thy suffering.

* * *

They led us to the Patriarchal Courtyard and began to wash our feet. O God, what a picture rises in the mind! They wash the feet, dry them with a towel, and the tears of the believers flowed freely; everyone is amazed by the depth of the lesson, seeing how we are taught to humble ourselves. What else shall I describe here? O God, humble us—we are Thine!

* * *

Here they seated us in rows and set out Old Testament Judean pitchers, and so the discourse of the Last Supper rises deep within the soul: from it began the great events, and it was the first hint to the disciples regarding His parting with them. Great are Thy sufferings, great is Thy love for us, O our Treasure; be not angry with us—we cannot abide without Thee.

* * *

They led us away to spend the night. They sang akathists by notes at the Tomb and upon Golgotha. O God, what joy! The heart trembles so from tenderness and hot tears. Then in the morning at twelve o'clock—the holy liturgy, and they began to sing Pascha. Here I looked around and cried: Earthly paradise, depart not from me, be within me!

* * *

Here in the cave of the Resurrection lies the cross of Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena, who, as history testifieth, found three crosses, and the Lord indicated upon which one He was crucified.

Everyone began to sing "We bow down before Thy Cross"... Thy Cross served as an enclosure of miracles. The Cross is with us, just as God is within us.

* * *

Also within the temple of the Resurrection, opposite the Arab altar, lies the tomb of Nicodemus, who built the Tomb for himself, yet lovingly laid the Lord in it. Thou seest, he did good deeds earlier and became worthy of a great talent.

Never be afraid to do good deeds, for through good thou wilt always be honored—it is the demon who arranges things so that thou becomest a Pharisee, rather than likening thyself and being like Nicodemus—that is the whole cunning role of the demon. But do good, do good, and thou shalt receive thy heavenly crown and peace.

* * *

How many altars there are in the temple of the Resurrection! Altars of Christians of all tongues; everyone prays in their own different languages.

* * *

I cannot describe everything; they tell many tales of how once they did not believe and closed the temple, and the Catholics stood at the Tomb, while the gaping Armenians were cast out upon the street, upon the porch—yet the Grace descended into a stone column, and one Turk spat into the column, and his teeth remained lodged there! Thou canst see how God punishes the non-believers.

O God, save and help us!..

* * *

They led us to the Dormition, where the Tomb of the Queen of Heaven rests; we walked along the road, and Turkish kavasses with burning torches led us, followed by a crowd of people walking with holy fear, and various lepers begging along the road—everything was just as it used to be in the times of the Savior, and the lepers similarly cry out: "Spare a coin!"

We beheld the house of Judas and the house of Pilate; they are not far from each other—neighbors, yet now nothing remains known of Pilate, and Judas serves as an example of all wicked flaws. With the crowd we reached the cave of the Mother of God, and the whole crowd began to sing: "In birth thou didst preserve virginity, in falling asleep thou didst not forsake the world"—the troparion and hymn unto the Theotokos. They venerated her tomb, and everyone sang and partook of her joy that the Lord took her body unto Himself.

* * *

We looked and once again pictured to ourselves what happened here, where the Heavenly Power took her most pure body. O Lord, forsake not the careless!

Right here in Her cave, Joseph is also buried, as the history testifieth; here the elder rests. O great elder! Pray unto God for us.

* * *

They led us to the Beautiful Gates, where the Lord was condemned for the final time. Oh, how dost thou look upon what judgment is!? If any ordinary man suffered, anyone would say of him: nay—that is what they are persecuting him for; oh, even this punishment is not enough for me; but for what they speak of, now he is innocent, though he surely sinned earlier. But the Lord sinned neither now nor before.

* * *

We reached Gethsemane, where the Lord often conversed with His disciples until His heavy sighings and prayers regarding the Cup of Death. We, unworthy sinners, bowed down to the very spot where we were mourned by His bloodied tears and drenched by His holy blood; when thou seest that we are standing here upon the very spot where He prayed, the whole crowd surged—some weeping, some sighing deeply, tears flowing from every eye. This stone in the wall is still drenched with the Savior's blood; this place, willy-nilly, will teach thee to pray. His spiritual feat is always before the eyes of believers, and when thou seest the spot where the Savior stood, and knowest that in the Garden of Gethsemane the Tears of God flowed like rivers, thou art afraid to step upon the earth, for every little pebble is holy—it is impossible to describe this feeling. O God, save and have mercy upon us in Thy heart.

* * *

Right here above we see the place where the disciples slept upon the stones, and the Lord came to wake them more than once, yet we slumber eternally in spiritual sleep and in evil. O Lord, awaken us!

* * *

We went higher and heard the ringing of the bells.

On the Grace of Great and Holy Saturday

Oh, what an expectation of the Holy Fire, how all the pilgrims languish before the procession! They wait for this holy fire for more than twenty-four hours. A thousand peoples and a multitude of nations. Many weep, while the Arabs clap their hands, jump, and sing something in a joyful frenzy; all around stand Turkish troops and kavasses. The main minute arrives: the patriarch undresses, remaining only in his undergarments, and enters the Edicule, where the tomb of Christ is...

The people, with hot tears and intense strain, wait for the patriarch to come out with the fire... Here he jumps out carrying the sacred fire and runs into the temple of the Resurrection, lighting the unquenchable candles, and then comes out to the people. From his bundle of candles the pilgrims also eagerly light their own; everyone is beside themselves with joy and feels not a drop of fatigue; they burn bundles of candles, thirty-three candles each. In the faces of the pilgrims burns an extraordinary joy, but there is a great, echoing noise throughout the temple. In all parts of the temple and in all the side altars, the folk have gathered joy and been filled with grace along with the lighting of the candles from the holy fire. Some took the fire all the way home, while others only scorched the candles; they lit and extinguished them up to three times. A wondrous event occurred and occurs still. O God, grant me memory so as not to ever forget such a renewal!

* * *

How pleasant it is to dwell in the Holy Land; one cannot but visit it with deep faith. Thou canst spend even a little time there, say three months, and thou wilt see the entire Shrine. But if thou dost not look around in those three months, even if thou livest there a full year, thou wilt see nothing, if thou art a healthy lazybones. God doth not hear the lazy, and thou canst live a lifetime and learn nothing, or learn it but fail to appreciate it. The Shrine loves holy fear. For Jerusalem, thou needest to visit

everywhere just once: visit all the places and truly appreciate them. At home, amidst thy works and daily labors, transport thyself in spirit to the Tomb and to the other places of the shrine. The first time, an incomprehensible joy appears unto thee, but the second time we will begin to blaspheme and disbelief will take deep root within us. Anyone who hath not been, ask them, betake thyself for the sake of obedience, and tell them with trembling how many worldly mistakes there are there for young male and female novices. It is very difficult for the nuns; it would be far better if they were not let go—there is enormous temptation, the enemy is very envious, and many of them become hangers-on and hawkers of holy items, running around saying, "we have a holy father," and signing thee up.

They sell wine, "rakija by the penny," and they drink it because it is cheap. This is mostly done by the little Athonite monks (kelliots); therefore, the little monks should not journey there; most of them live apart from Jerusalem. It is not supposed to be explained, but whoever has been there knows.

* * *

I was at the Jordan; they sang the troparion "When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan" and the kontakion, and we plunged into the waters of the Jordan. We looked out upon the Jordan desert, where Mary of Egypt found her salvation. Upon the spot where Thou, O Lord, wast baptized, everyone plunges into the water and thinks earnestly upon the absolution of their sins. There is great, fervent faith in the crowd. A multitude of nations run with trembling unto the Jordan for deliverance from their sins. O Lord, how the soul seeks peace; distance is as nothing to it! Many thousands are transported body and soul from one end of the earth to the other merely to find purification. O God, cleanse us in the waters of Thy Jordan! We also looked upon the Dead Sea; God's punishment rests upon it, and fear and horror embraced us. How the Lord waxed wroth at the lawlessness of the people: only dead waters are visible; no animal, no insect liveth in them, and there are

absolutely no fish. We look, and we weep. Woe unto us! God did not spare the wicked cities. O Lord, spare us, guard us for the great day of Thy Judgment!

* * *

In this very desert, God sent grace unto Elisha. It is impossible to point out the exact place where Elijah was taken up to heaven; the whole Jordan desert is brimming with events. There is little vegetation in it. The Jordan is but a small river, overgrown with shrubs and small woods; there is no bathhouse, they simply bathe straight from the shore.

* * *

There are many monasteries in the vicinity. Just as John the Forerunner and other ascetics from biblical tales performed ascetic feats through fasting and silence, so later monks lived around the Jordan; only the Greeks distorted everything, but the desert itself remains pure in the heart.

* * *

The Monastery of Gerasimos. Here the Venerable Gerasimos fed on no one knows what and lived peaceably with wild beasts. The Greeks are welcoming but do not preserve the events that took place here and pay no heed to the biblical side. Here every little pebble is sanctified by holiness, but I cannot say this to many: every soul is vitalized by faith alone.

* * *

In Jericho stands the house of Zacchaeus, which is spoken of in the Holy Gospel. There they made excavations—finding a mosaic floor, uncovered by an academic from the Panteleimon Monastery—I am acquainted with him. Thou lookest at these places—everything is exactly as it was, and

thou imaginest that it was as if only yesterday the people crowded here, and the Lord lifted the heavy burden of earthly ties. Truly, the folk did not crowd for naught; it is visible, and deep feeling says that just as the world pressed in before to receive a gift from God and received it—so it is even now.

* * *

In the Jordan desert itself, there springs the well of the prophet Elisha, but the kavass did not lead us there and grew angry.

Right here is the Evangelical fig tree; this barren fig tree represents our unpurified sins, yet we do not wish to be purified, nor do we fear God and His holy words.

* * *

The Monastery of the Forty Days is located upon a high mountain, where the demon tempted the Lord. A wondrous temple is built there, and within it lies a small cell, which houses the very stone upon which the demon tempted the Lord, and they venerate it. Truly the spirit is contrite over the Divine suffering! He wishes to redeem us from the evil one, and now, right where His temptation took place, they also sell "rakija" cheaply—in our language, vodka. Thou seest, the demon is cunning; how he catches us all!

* * *

Not far away lies the monastery of George of Choziba, and then the Lavra of Sabbas, nestled in the mountains, in a desolate place over a yawning abyss. Holy springs flow; many bones have been dug up; there are special, grace-filled bones. In some places over the abyss, thou feelest that holy ascetics found their salvation here.

* * *

Upon the way from there stands the inn of the Good Samaritan, but now it is managed by the Turks, and they offer no water!

* * *

The Oak of Mamre! Great goodness and love rest under the Oak of Mamre. Here Abraham welcomed the Lord with bread and salt, who appeared in the form of three wanderers, and now this Trinity is glorified and depicted. The Oak of Mamre, alongside Sarah and Abraham, serve as a shining example with their goodness. How pleasant it is to share food with a weary wanderer! The Wisdom here lies in the fact that the Lord revealed Himself in the Trinity for the affectionate greeting of Abraham and Sarah and their entire family. We fell down before the tree, bowed to it, and served a moleben. Half of the oak hath withered from great antiquity, from many thousands of years, but there are a few parts of the tree which, by a miracle of God, are greening—this is the goodness of God, and it will be green forever and praise God. And so one wishes to do good; so in this tree goodness greens as well, so that the memory of the fact that the Lord visited this oak will not be erased and will remain deeply rooted in the heart of every Christian.

* * *

Along this same road lie the Pools of Solomon, where they watered his cattle. By his great wisdom they are so arranged that the water in them doth not dry up at all, although there is not much of it.

* * *

Bethany is upon the way to the Jordan near Jerusalem. We stayed at that place, saw the stone, and venerated it, where Christ said unto Martha—"thou art anxious about many things, but one thing is needful." These words hold a mighty influence in this place. A temple is built here, and how these places caress and call the soul into the heavenly mansion! Not far from here lies the tomb of Lazarus—as deep as his resurrection resonates within the Gospel.

Thou passest by these places, sighing and thinking: "O God, resurrect my soul from the dark abyss of sin; every man pictures to himself Thy resurrection throughout the whole earth and is transported there in spirit—it is accessible to all believers." Let us think how many wondrous events occurred there and how we must feel the resurrection of Lazarus for everyone and everything throughout the whole earth.

* * *

In Jaffa, the Apostle Peter resurrected Tabitha. We visited the cave where he raised her, and her cave so lovingly caresses the Russian pilgrim: the Apostle Peter and his energetic prayer unto the Lord are vividly envisioned.

Right here upon the shore are the ruins of the ark, say the Turks. The ark is a parable of salvation for Christians, and the words of righteous Noah come true over us. Our salvation is the Church, and whoever hears the cry of Noah—let him be saved!

Our mother is the Holy Church!

In Bethlehem, there stands an enormous temple; there are many nations and altars within it, and all sorts of conveniences, but for Russian pilgrims, there are always only inconveniences! But then, when thou seest the mangers of the Savior Himself—thou forgettest thy fatigue and various worldly monastic

intrigues! We venerated His mangers, and we could scarcely believe out of sheer joy that the Lord showed His mercy unto us! Where Christ was born—we bowed, and where they laid Him, that place too the wanderers and pilgrims kissed, and there is radiant joy upon everyone's face! Right here Herod slew the infants. What evil and envy possessed him, that he resolved to kill the infants in his own city and was not ashamed of the mockery of his close ones, and took absolutely no pity upon the children! How treacherous is envy! Here too is the cave of all the slain infants, a multitude numbering in the thousands! The Russian pilgrims looked with dread horror at Herod's evil and his treacherous envy, and wept over the innocent infants whose little bones lie here! What it must have been like for those mothers to part with them. Evil and envy reside in us to this very day, between the great and the greater, and intrigue reigns in the crown; but truth, like a blade of grass on a cold autumn night, waits patiently for sunrise. When the sun rises, then they shall find the truth!

* * *

In the same temple is the place where the Angel informed Joseph when Herod began to plot to slay the infants. We venerated it, and all the Russian pilgrims lovingly caressed this place and looked upon that very staircase, bound with a grate, by which Joseph went out to further accomplish the flight into Egypt. With love and faith, we looked after this staircase, where Joseph exited from the Bethlehem temple, out onto the thorny path into flight.

* * *

Upon the road to Bethlehem, not far from the city, lies the tomb of Rachel, who "weeps for her children" and refuses to be comforted.

* * *

From Bethlehem, we went out of the city and reached the shepherds' cave, where the Angel announced the great joy to the shepherds and where they sang—"Glory to God in the Highest." All the pilgrims sang and bowed to the icon upon which the Angel announcing the great joy is depicted. We sang Pascha; it was the second day of the Feast. The little cave gladdened us, because in it lies the wondrous philosophizing of the Magi, which history teacheth. O Lord, we lack wisdom; make us wise, for Thine is the power, both then and now!

* * *

One must also remember, in Jerusalem, not far from the Procession of the Cross, the small temple of Anna the God-Receiver, and within it the cave where the bones of the great elder Simeon the God-Receiver are buried. How joyful it is in his cave! How the Lord crowned him! What a wondrous event happened unto him when he did not believe the saying of the prophets and wished to cross out the prophecy that the Lord would be born of a virgin, and an Angel stayed his hand; therefore he drowned his ring in the sea. What events and phenomena! The prophets themselves did not fully believe in His birth!

And so, to relieve his disbelief, a fish grabbed his ring in the sea and was caught by a fisherman. The fisherman brought it to the market, and a novice bought the fish, brought it home, and found the ring deep inside it, which he took back to Simeon. Simeon then said—"Truly the Son of God will be born" and said unto himself—"when mine eyes have seen my salvation—then I will yield my spirit unto the Lord"; and so he died then, when he finally saw the Lord.

We venerated the wisely-painted icon where the little fish is depicted.

* * *

When we were traveling upon the steamer on the way back, we again approached the place where the whale threw out the prophet Jonah, and we sang the Paschal song, "as Jonah from the whale, Thou hast risen from the tomb." The whole crowd of people looked out at the spot where the miracle event occurred. There is a small stone pillar and a shallow quadrangular pit; the steamer stood for half a day opposite this place.

* * *

The Monastery of the Cross is the most ancient of them all. In it they show the place where the tree grew, the very one upon which Christ was crucified, and which was planted by the righteous Lot. In short, it is said that when Lot was brought out of Sodom, he was tempted by seduction, and so the Lord, through an elder, blessed him to plant three charred logs and water them with water. He planted the three logs, and he carried water from the Jordan and watered them. The Lord heard his prayer—a tree grew out of one log. There is a depiction of this tree upon icons, showing how Lot waters and plants it—all this is depicted in the cave. How the Lord glorifies even sinners! The church herself sings the praises of this tree; from it the Cross was fashioned upon which Christ was crucified.

How the Lord crowned righteous Lot; he was righteous before, and then fell into great depravity, but he repented. Here is the first salvation—if a man lives for God's sake, then even though Satan tempts him, he will still be saved, as long as it is not out of self-interest; but he who acts out of self-interest will be a brother to Judas.

In the house of Joachim and Anna they found a mosaic—a doe bowed its head at their feet. O Lord, all animals are submissive unto them!

There are many different peoples, and they are all clever in their own spirit, but there is little faith in everyone and in all nations, and no love. One must be very affectionate with them; they do not understand, but they look at thy love as a marvel. And so, at the time when we point to heaven, they look with love and a change occurs in their faces, and immediately they speak of the prophets. There are very many clever ones, but they have no faith; one must converse with them greatly, but not about faith, rather about love—may God save them! One must not criticize or point out one's own faith, how high it is, but one must first win them over, and then carefully and meekly sow one's faith, though this takes years. One must show an example of love and possess a bright love; only then will there be Christians as in the early years, and the Christian mission will serve not for money, but out of pure goodness. They understand very well when thou speakest, and words reflect upon them surprisingly—they immediately sit down around thee and look at thee. It is absolutely necessary to know their language and the character of their nations, and above all, to have love for God as a friend; otherwise, even if we fast, but do not know how to converse with God, we will have absolutely no effect upon people! Just as a bell without silver sounds poor, so too the inexperienced person will always only spoil things.

If thou lovest, thou wilt kill no one—all the commandments are submissive to love—in it lies a great wisdom, greater than in Solomon, and such a height that only love alone exists, and all the rest is like mere fractions within it, and through it is the exit to heaven.

* * *

How much dearer is one small piece of bread to a starving man than a large ship! And how much money is needed for a ship! He who can understand, let him understand.

* * *

Indeed, many people travel upon the steamer, several hundreds, and in this crowd is a hotbed of faith; only the demon hath confused many, but in it lies much gold and pearl—the secret support of the state. Everyone in their own corner hath spiritual strength; they will tell the youths about Jerusalem; fear will appear in these youths, and they will come to love the Motherland and the Tsar. I am certain that if there is more faith, no barbarian will ever undermine its root. We must pay more attention to the pilgrims—transport them more cheaply and arrange it so that the mission doth not take money from them for boiling water, for rooms, for the barracks, and give them a meal once a day, and not transport them like cattle in the holds, sometimes up to seven hundred together (though this year five hundred, fewer than usual). But as it is, pilgrims are treated like cattle, yet hand over money for boiling water, and for the barracks, and for everything

Pilgrims travel for the sake of the holy places, but they have to endure much. It is very good for the rich; they have lots of money and a good room! Yes, we must try to transport the poor pilgrims more freely; they will strongly support Russia with simple faith, they will tell their own people about the Tomb of Christ—this is a great goodness for the common folk that is beyond price!

* * *

Monasteries are essential for the common folk; let them behave like brethren, God is their true judge; but there are among them those moved by the Holy Spirit and men of prayer. The monastic rule strongly influences a Christian and serves as a great support for the state.

The simpleton will bow to the Holy Shrine and go through the villages, telling with faith about the service and the monastic rule in his simple language; it is evident that he is telling the truth, and so his simplicity will instill love for God within the family, and the youths will listen to the wanderer and

remember his words when they go into military service. Love will settle within them—they will love the monastery, and in it lies the very birthplace of love, and it is true, in reality, that whoever reviles the monastery reviles everything else, for the monastic rule teaches one to love!

* * *

Here is another great event—the Catholic Easter in Jerusalem. I was an eyewitness and compared their Easter with ours—theirs was a week earlier. What to say of their Easter? With us, everyone, even the non-Orthodox, rejoices, light plays upon faces, and it is evident that all creatures make merry; but with them, even in the temple itself, there is no joy, as if someone had died and there is no animation: they come out, and it is clear that there is no Pascha in their souls, as there is with the chosen ones, but just mere weekdays. What comparison can there be with the Pascha of Orthodoxy; it is entirely different! Oh, we happy Orthodox! No faith can be compared with the Orthodox! Others have dexterity—they even trade in holy things, but it is clear that they have no joy in anything; what a deception, when even upon Easter they serve, yet their faces are gloomy; therefore one can boldly prove that if the soul is not glad, then the face is not bright—generally there is gloom. But with the Orthodox, when they start ringing the bells and thou goest to the temple, thou praisest Easter even with thy feet, and even inanimate objects brighten in one's eyes! I do not presume to judge, I am only reasoning and comparing the Catholic Easter with ours, as I saw how they served Easter at the Tomb in the Holy City, but the depth of wisdom I do not presume to judge! I felt how our Orthodox rejoice, what a magnitude of happiness we possess, and one would like our faith not to be degraded; for it blooms over the righteous without spring; as an example one can point to Father John of Kronstadt, and how many Luminaries we have—a thousand men of God!